CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Magda Bauta Solés (Cuba)

GE.93-61327 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I have pleasure in declaring open the 656th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As delegations are aware, two distinguished representatives are leaving us to take up new and important functions that they have been given by their Governments. Both have recently discharged the duties of President of the Conference with great competence, tact and intelligence at particularly delicate periods of our work. Ambassador Michel Servais of Belgium guided the work of the Conference during the conclusion of the negotiations on the Convention banning chemical weapons. Subsequently, he was entrusted with the delicate task of initiating open-ended consultations on questions concerning the membership and agenda of the Conference, a task that he carried out with the efficiency and dedication we have come to expect of him. Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil, who for reasons that are connected with his new post cannot be with us today, is concluding a particularly successful period as representative of his country in our midst. He also had the difficult task of helping Ambassador Servais in the consultations I have already referred to, and in particular the delicate responsibility of conducting our work in a very important phase as regards the organization of the Conference, after the conclusion of the Convention on chemical weapons. His efforts, conducted with his well-known diplomatic skill and outstanding personal qualities, were crowned with success. Ambassador Amorim has just taken up a post that does justice to his professional qualities, that of Secretary-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of his country. Other esteemed colleagues from his delegation are also leaving Geneva together with Ambassador Celso Amorim. On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf I would like to wish all these representatives and their spouses every success in their future activities.

On the list of speakers for today I have the representatives of Brazil and Peru. I now call on the representative of Brazil, Minister de Sá Barbuda.

Mr. BARBUDA (Brazil): Madam President, it is my pleasure to take the floor during the Cuban presidency. Let me convey to you our warm congratulations for your assumption of this important function of President of the Conference on Disarmament. It is gratifying to see the Conference presided by a representative of Cuba, a country with which Brazil has friendly and close relations.

The purpose of my taking the floor today is to convey to you and to all distinguished representatives of members and observer delegations the farewell message received from the head of the Brazilian delegation, Ambassador Celso Amorim. It was Ambassador Amorim's intention to be in Geneva today and address the Conference on Disarmament, but important duties kept him in Brazil for some more days. I will read his message now.

"I have recently been assigned with new challenging duties by the Minister of External Relations of Brazil and I should shortly be leaving Geneva.

(Mr. Barbuda, Brazil)

"Since I cannot attend this last plenary meeting of the second part of the 1993 session, I have instructed the members of my delegation to place on the records of the Conference on Disarmament that it was for me highly gratifying, both personal and professionally, to represent my country in this Conference.

"Almost two years ago, as a newcomer to the Conference, I was received with all the courtesy and friendship one could expect. Help and encouragement were frequently offered from the colleagues, who soon became my source of intellectual inspiration. I am grateful to you all.

"During my stay in Geneva I shared with you the satisfaction to see the historic conclusion by the Conference of the long-awaited chemical weapons Convention. I was honoured with the appointment to sign it in Paris, last January, on behalf of the Brazilian Government.

"Alphabetical determinism, as I said before, made the responsibility of presiding over this Conference fall upon me in the very beginning of this year.

"Niccolò Machiavelli believed that fate, la fortuna, could be influenced by personal skills, la virtù, to anticipate and prepare the ground for events to come. I think Machiavelli would be disappointed to see my exercise of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament with more fortuna than virtù.

"It was a fortunate coincidence for me to become the President of this august body during my rather short stay in Geneva. I consider no less than a privilege to have had such an opportunity, which has been occurring at long six-year intervals only.

"I was also fortunate to have presided the Conference when the United Nations disarmament machinery was being reassessed. The Conference on Disarmament then gave proof of its vitality with the prompt establishment of four ad hoc committees and the early start of its substantive work in the 1993 session. Two Friends of the President, Ambassadors Marín Bosch, of Mexico, and O'Sullivan, of Australia, were nominated before I concluded my period as President to conduct consultations on the issues of the agenda and of the membership of the Conference. I wish them a successful conclusion of the important tasks entrusted to them.

"Our common effort also resulted in the elaboration of two reports later forwarded to the reconvened session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: one of those contained the comments of the Conference regarding the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled 'New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era'; and the other report referred to the ongoing review of the agenda, composition and methods of work of the Conference.

(Mr. Barbuda, Brazil)

"With these reports, we met a challenge which seemed very difficult if not impossible. I am grateful to the support offered to me as President of the Conference in the production of those results. They were only possible because of the very high level of the participating delegates, who expressed their national interests together with a clear interpretation of the wish of the international community.

"We have witnessed rapid changes in the world in recent years together with the opening of an unprecedented window of opportunity for this Conference to reaffirm its efficiency as a negotiating body. Results are expected from the Conference now in nuclear disarmament, in particular the prohibition of nuclear tests, in conventional weapons control, and in ensuring that advanced technologies, such as those used in outer space, are not diverted to non-peaceful purposes.

"In relation to the so-called sensitive technologies, I would like to see an enhanced role of our negotiating body. Multilateral rules for high-technology transfers and control are a natural consequence of disarmament negotiations. I am convinced that multilaterally agreed rules in this field are likely to be implemented and respected without undue excessive restrictions that tend to interfere with economic development.

"We should keep in mind in our endeavours that measures to ensure international security go far beyond simple arms regulation and disarmament. Security and the protection of peoples' welfare are inseparable, when the wish is the promotion of long-lasting peace.

"Continued connivance, in a positive sense, is required from the representatives in the Conference on Disarmament in their efforts to promote international security. Let us connive and produce the expected results in disarmament, support the promotion of social justice, democracy and well-being and so be proud of our contribution to the construction of a more secure and peaceful world.

"In the exercise of my new functions, I will continue to follow closely the work of this Conference and I already pledge the full commitment of Brazil in contributing to the attainment of the objectives of our multilateral negotiation. The Conference on Disarmament will certainly continue to count on the support of the delegation of Brazil.

"My final words are of gratitude for all representatives and for the Secretary-General of the Conference and his competent staff."

Here ends the message. I just wish to thank you again for the very kind words that you addressed to Ambassador Amorim and to the delegation of Brazil.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement with the message sent to us by Ambassador Amorim, as well as the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would be grateful to him if he would convey our words of farewell to Ambassador Amorim. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru, Mr. Quirós.

Mr. QUIROS (Peru) (translated from Spanish): First of all allow me to say how pleased my delegation is at seeing a brother country from Latin America, Cuba, and you, Madam President, whose outstanding professional and personal qualities are well known to all of us, take up the presidency of our Conference. You may count on the full cooperation of the delegation of Peru. I have asked for the floor this morning on behalf of the Group of 21 to make a very brief statement concerning the non-formation of ad hoc committees and the non-appointment of special coordinators for items 2, 3, 6 and 7 on our agenda.

(continued in English)

On behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to make the following statement. The Conference on Disarmament, in document CD/1180 dated 22 January 1993, agreed "without prejudice to any future decisions on the organizational framework of other items" to begin its work immediately on four agenda items. The Group of 21 had gone along with the above based on the understanding as was reflected in its statement of 21 January 1993 at the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/PV.637). The Group of 21 notes that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to establish ad hoc committees and regrets that it has not appointed special coordinators for agenda items 2, 3, 6 and 7. This situation should in no way constitute a precedent for the future work of the Conference. This is also without prejudice to paragraph 5 (d) of the decision on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament contained in document CD/1036 of 21 August 1990.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Peru for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I have pleasure in calling on the distinguished Ambassador Michel Servais of Belgium.

Mr. SERVAIS (Belgium) (translated from French): I congratulate you, Madam President, and thank you for giving me the floor. I congratulate you because it is your country which is serving as President at the end of this second session and which will be in the Chair until the beginning of the next session, well into the middle of the next session. This is a delicate role because you are going to have to give the push which will allow us to start working on the annual report of the Conference, and that is hard work, God knows - I speak from experience.

My usual neighbour Ambassador Celso Amorim, ever modest, has given us the surprise of not coming today to hear all the nice things you thought of him, and of me. My colleague from Brazil has said all there was to say on the political issues, and on the message we have to leave for others, so I won't repeat the wise words that we heard just now. You too, Madam President, said more or less everything that could have been said, and I am still quite overcome at the high opinion you have of me. I know my colleagues think nothing of it, but I will take it at face value. What is important is to thank you wholeheartedly. I wish to thank all those here, all those who have

(Mr. Servais, Belgium)

already left us for other posts, or who will be leaving us. You first of all, Madam, for the functions you are discharging, all my colleagues, because throughout the short time I have spent in Geneva I have benefited from their cooperation and kindness. It is quite typical that in the Conference on Disarmament we are known by our first names and nobody around the room feels obliged to engage in role-playing. Naturally I thank the Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, but in a very special way. We have travelled a long way together - six months now - and when I refer to the Secretary-General, obviously this is a shorthand, because this of course covers all his devoted colleagues who I am seeing for the last time in this room, at least in my capacity as Belgian Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament. I thank them because, especially for a small country, it would not have been possible to serve as President for such a long period without the daily absolute dedication of the Secretary-General's team. I also thank all the links in the chain which enable us to carry out our functions. I am thinking first of all of the interpreters, whose great merit is that they sometimes succeed in giving meaning to statements that have none. I thank the secretaries, the technicians and all those who ensure that our activities go off smoothly.

I would like to conclude by saying au revoir rather than farewell. It is rather strange for me, in such a short space of time, to come from a warlike organization, NATO. I was deputy permanent representative of Belgium at NATO. The authorities saw fit to appoint me as ambassador for disarmament, and now I have been put in charge of the new NATO department. You see, there is a sort of change, I believe a change in thinking as well. At the time when I joined the Belgian delegation at NATO, the order of the day was more or less "nuke them all" I came to the Conference on Disarmament, where the slogan was "disarm or die", and now I am going back to a decision-making position in NATO. But what I can tell you is that the slogan is no longer "nuke them all" - on the contrary, I think that the end of the cold war and the prospects opening up in a world that may be less stable, but is just as dangerous as it might have been before because of that instability, have changed all that. I think that the experience I have acquired amongst all of you here over the last 19 months will allow me to look at matters with a dash of disarmament which I hope will be of some use for the future of your work. Yet again I thank you all for your kindness and collegial spirit, and as I have said, I hope that this will be an au revoir and not a farewell.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank Ambassador Servais for his kind words to my delegation and I can assure him that as far as modesty is concerned he is also in the running with Ambassador Amorim. I think Ambassador Servais knows quite well that not only will he miss us, but we will all miss him, not only for his outstanding professional skills but also on account of his eternal optimism and his very bright outlook on life. Let us hope that this professional move by Ambassador Servais will truly be a symbol of the balance that can be achieved between the need to guarantee the right to self-defence and the progress which is necessary and indispensable for mankind in these times in the field of disarmament. This at least is the symbol that my delegation sees in his transfer to new duties. Best wishes for success, Ambassador Servais, and all our affection goes with you.

(The President)

The secretariat has distributed today the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the first week of the third part of the annual session of the Conference. The timetable has been prepared in consultation with the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies and is purely indicative. It is subject to change if necessary. If there is no objection I shall take it that the timetable is adopted.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Tomorrow we will conclude the second part of the annual session. The third part will begin on Monday, 26 July, and the next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 29 July at 10 a.m. The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.